

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

IO-13 OMB-01 ACDA-07 EUR-12 MC-02 /099 W

-----231610Z 016425 /44-L

R 231520Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6992

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0614

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, ET

SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA, ETHIOPIA AND THE ERITREANS

REF: CAIRO 873

1. IN A JANUARY 22 MEETING WITH AHMED SIRAJ, THE DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN AFFAIRS AT THE SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTRY, WE DISCUSSED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA WITH EMPHASIS ON ERITREA. SIRAJ SAID THAT ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE SAG THE POSITION OF THE EITHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (EPMG) HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED OF LATE. DESPITE SAUDI SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN ASPIRATIONS THEY DID NOT REGARD THIS AS A PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT. THE SAG SUPPORTS THE UNITY OF ETHIOPIA (THE QUESTION OF ERITREA'S STATUS ASIDE) AND HAS NO INTEREST IN SEEING ETHIOPIA FRAGMENT THUS PROVIDING FERTILE GROUND FOR RADICALISM IN AN AREA WHICH SAUDI ARABIA CONSIDERS STRATEGICALLY VITAL. WHAT IS NEEDED HE SAID IS A STRONG
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AND MODERATE LEADERSHIP CAPABLE OF HOLDING ETHIOPIA TOGETHER AND AT THE SAME TIME SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT OF ITS OWN POSITION TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WITH THE ERITREANS. SIRAJ DISMISSED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION'S (EDU'S)

DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY TO BRING ABOUT MAJOR CHANGE IN THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA. HE SAID THAT ALI MIRAH, WHO IS STILL

RESIDENT IN JIDDA, SHARES THE POLITICAL IMPOTENCE OF THE REST.

2. AS FOR THE ERITREANS, SIRAJ SAID THAT SAUDI POLICY REMAINS SUPPORT FOR THE UNIFICATION OF THE VARIOUS ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. HE SAID THE POPULAR LIBERATION FRONT (PLF) FOREIGN MISSIONS FACTION OF OSMAN SALEH SABBE IS NO LONGER RECEIVING SAUDI SUPPORT BECAUSE OF ITS LACK OF INFLUENCE WITHIN ERITREA. THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF) HAS NOW BECOME THE MAJOR RECIPIENT OF SAUDI BACKING. #HE DID NOT DEFINE THE KIND OR AMOUNT OF THIS SUPPORT.) SIRAJ SAID THAT HE HAD MET WITH SOME OF THE NEW ELF LEADERS AND FOUND THEM TO BE AN IMPROVEMENT OVER SOME OF THE OLDER LEADERS IN TERMS OF THEIR EDUCATION AND NATIVE INTELLIGENCE. HE EXPECTED THAT THEY WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO SAUDI PRESSURE TO COMPOSE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE OTHE FACTIONS, INCLUDING THAT OF ISIAS AFERWERK.

3. SIRAJ ASKED THAT WE PROVIDE HIM WITH AN UPDATE ON THE SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA SIMILAR TO PREVIOUS REPORTS WE HAVE PROVIDED. REQUEST WE BE AUTHORIZED TO PASS TO SAG FOREIGN MINISTRY THE ASSESSMENT REQUESTED BY EGYPTIAN FONMIN FAHMY (REFTEL).
PORTER

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 23-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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